

## Ms. J's411

~Ferlich July Arrington

While the numbers of teens engaging in sexual activity has been gradually decreasing during the past decade, there is still great cause for concern. Each teen that engages in sexual activity prior to adulthood, dramatically increases their chances for pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases. In addition, youth who begin having sex at a younger age are exposed to these risks over a long period of time. They are also more likely to have more sexual partners which also heightens their risks. Some of the key factors behind a teenagers decision to abstain from sexual intercourse are: Teenagers who perceive that they have a better level of communication with their parents, Teens increase in age and decrease in communication with parents increase the risk of engaging in sexual intercourse. In addition, teen/mother relationships have a significant impact on decision-making. Studies show that if a teen has a high level of satisfaction with a relationship they have with their mother and know that the mother disapproves of premarital sex, they are less likely to participate in sexual activity. Teens who reported a low level of satisfaction with their mother were more twice as likely as those highly satisfied with their relationship to be having sexual intercourse. It is also interesting to note that when surveyed teens have a strong opinion about the guidance they receive about sexual activity. Teens who choose to abstain from sexual activity they should abstain from sex until they are at least out of high school.

believe it is important to be given a strong message from society that Communication is the key to the parent/teen relationship. Research has revealed that parent/child "connectedness" protects youth. Adolescents thrive in an environment with high expectations where they are given firm direction and consistent messages by a parent or an adult mentor to whom they feel a close connection. Not surprisingly, the Federally sponsored National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health also known as Add Health Found that family connections protects teenagers from harm.

When researchers surveyed more than 90,000 teenagers, they found that when children feel loved and cared for by their parents they are less likely to engage in risk behaviors. I believe you should talk to your teens and engage in behaviors that make them feel loved and cared for. There are quite a few actions you can take to support your teenager. Teens who are engaged in school and learning and who participate in extracurricular projects and sports volunteering or religious activities are less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors. Also be cognizant of your child's peers. Encourage him/her to maintain friendship with other teens who do not engage in risk-related behaviors. Last, but not least, spend time with your teen doing things they like to do. Use this time to communicate about what's important in your teen's life and convey clear, consistent messages about avoiding sex. Until next time Take care of yourself. Ferlich R. July- Arrington

## Johnny "Billy" Thompson celebrates birthday with Hilton bash



L to R. - Willie Johnson, Joe Teague, Billy Thompson - birthday boy, Matthew (Sonny) Watts, Charles VanZandt, Walter Session and Alvin Sneed

Duncanville, TX. - Johnny (Billy) Thompson of Dallas, formerly of Rusk, celebrated his birthday March 15, 2008 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Duncanville, Texas. His guests were treated to a three course sit down dinner, and a mixture of oldies and modern music.

A local theater dance group performed the two-step, the swing and other popular dances. The bar was open for those who desired to enjoy it. Family and friends from Ft. Worth to Rusk were on hand to join in wishing him a happy birthday, including that old gang of his seem with him in the picture above.

## Alphonso Jackson Resigns from page 1

Murray, D-Wash., said after Jackson's announcement. President Bush called Jackson "a strong leader and a good man." Ties between the two men go back to the 1980s when they lived in the same Dallas neighborhood. It was Jackson's personal ties to Bush that brought him to Washington, where

preserved affordable housing and increased minority

homeownership." Bush has been cool to the idea of a big federal housing rescue. "The temptation of Washington is to say that anything short of a massive government intervention in the housing market amounts to inaction," the president said recently. "I strongly disagree with that sentiment."



he displayed a forceful personal style at HUD for seven years, first as the agency's No. 2 official and since 2004 in the top slot. Despite a strong commitment to housing for those in need, Jackson was capable of ill-advised public comments. In announcing his departure, Jackson said that in his time at HUD, "We have helped families keep their

On Monday on his way out of the country for a trip built around a NATO summit, Bush said he wants Congress to modernize HUD's Federal Housing Administration, allowing more struggling homeowners to refinance their mortgages.

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